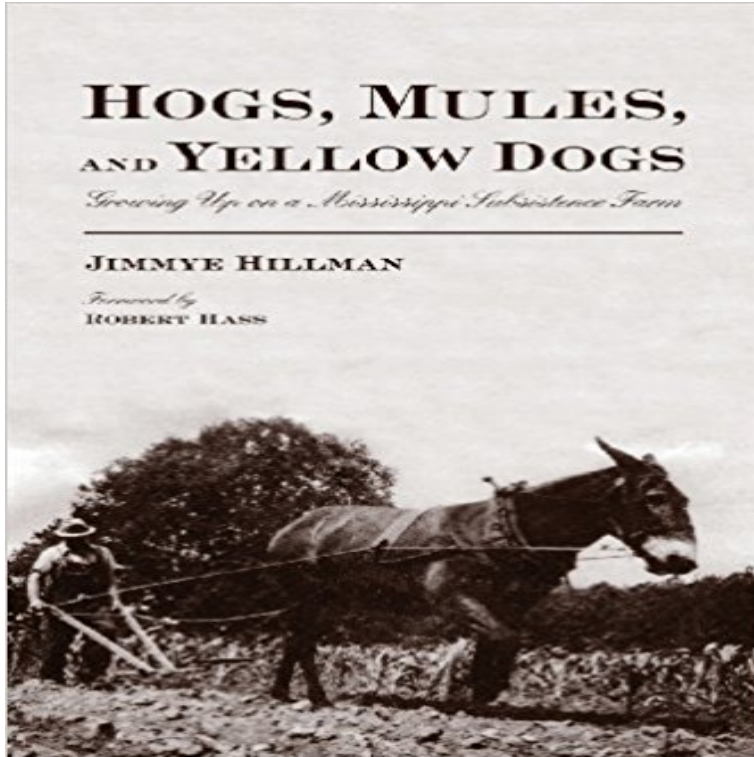


# Hogs, Mules, and Yellow Dogs: Growing Up on a Mississippi Subsistence Farm



Its in the nature of things that whole worlds disappear, writes the poet Robert Hass in the foreword to Jimmie Hillmans insightful memoir. Their vanishings, more often than not, go unrecorded or pass into myth, just as they slip from the memory of the living. To ensure that the world of Jimmie Hillmans childhood in Greene County, Mississippi during the Great Depression doesnt slip away, he has gathered together accounts of his family and the other people of Old Washington village. There are humorous stories of hog hunting and heart-wrenching tales of poverty set against a rural backdrop shaded by the local social, religious, and political climate of the time. Jimmie and his family were subsistence farmers out of bare-bones necessity, decades before discussions about sustainability made such practices laudable. More than just childhood memories and a family saga, though, this book serves as a snapshot of the natural, historical, and linguistic details of the time and place. It is a remarkable record of Southern life. Observations loaded with detail uncover broader themes of work, family loyalty, and the politics of changing times. Hillman, now eighty-eight, went on to a distinguished career as an economist specializing in agriculture. He realizes the importance of his story as an example of the cultural history of the Deep South but allows readers to discover the significance on their own by witnessing the lives of a colorful cast of characters. Hogs, Mules, and Yellow Dogs is unique, a blend of humor and reflection, wisdom and sympathy but its also a hard-nosed look at the realities of living on a dirt farm in a vanished world.

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